

Employees enroll in Shared Care Program

Unique Center Operations Directorate program leads to safer workplace

It fosters an attitude of safety – of looking out for your own safety and that of your coworkers. Over the past year that it has been in effect across JSC's Center Operations Directorate, it has resulted in a higher safety awareness among COD employees, which reflects a safer environment for the employees in the workplace and at home.

It's called the COD Shared Care Program, an employee-driven safety initiative that allows employees to participate in a number of safety-related activities, one of which is the Safety VISA Program where employees can earn points that can result in monetary awards. But the best reward of all for the employees is the safer workplace and home environment that result from their awareness of safety and health issues.

"The COD Shared Care Program is an effective tool that empowers the employee to take a proactive stance on safety," said COD Acting Director Nate Wright. "Programs like this are great for increasing awareness. Long term, through effective processes like this, we will develop a sense of safety in everything we do."

The COD Shared Care Program is aligned closely with the Voluntary Protection Program, which recognizes and promotes effective safety and health management. Management, labor and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration unite to establish a cooperative relationship at a workplace that has implemented a strong program. Sitewide, JSC received VPP certification at the Star level in May 1999.

"In 1997, a small team of COD safety representatives got together with the intention of devising a program that would demonstrate COD's commitment to safety and the Voluntary Protection Program from the perspective of the employees themselves rather than from the management team," said COD Emergency Preparedness Officer Dennis Perrin. "Out of that working group came the Shared Care Program. We wanted the focus of this – program to be on COD employees taking responsibility for their safety program and helping their coworkers and other employees have a safer workplace."

Since being implemented on April 22, 1999, the Shared Care Program has had a



NASA JSC Photo 2000-04631 by Benny Benavides
Center Operations Directorate Safety Team members, from left, front: COD Deputy Director Joel Walker, Jacques Talboy, Delores Marshall, and Leti Fenner; back: Henry Wyndon, Ken Chevalier, Byron Winters, Dennis Perrin, Grady Owens, and COD Acting Director Nate Wright. Not pictured: Becky Castillo, Ramon Ramirez, Libby Salas.

profound effect on improving the safety awareness of the civil servants in the workplace. Fifty-six percent of the COD employees participated in the 1999 Shared Care Program, a much higher figure than the 40 percent that was predicted when the program began.

those of their coworkers as well. Brochures that list elements to look for when doing facility inspections are available to assist employees.

The objectives of the planned drills are to teach coworkers what to do in case of emergencies; plan and conduct emergency drills; and evaluate COD's readiness in case of a real emergency. Emergency fire alarm drills were conducted in the 300 and 400 area buildings in 1999. COD's safety team plans to conduct emergency drills in additional buildings in the coming year.

The safety card is designed to award or alert fellow employees about a safe or an unsafe act that they did. Because they care about each other, COD employees recognize each other for acting safely or warn colleagues about unsafe actions.

As part of the program, employees can also submit their thoughts on what the 19 elements of JSC's VPP mean to them and how they will try to meet them in their work environment. These

elements include such items as accountability, preventive maintenance, employee participation, and management commitment and planning. Responses are posted on the COD homepage.

The focal point of the Shared Care Program is the safety VISA book, which

consists of two programs that offer employees the opportunity to earn special rewards for their efforts in safety involvement. One program is for management, the other for non-management employees. Each offers employees 40 opportunities to earn up to 117 VISA points during the year.

The safety VISA book allows employees to learn more about the JSC safety program, participate in the COD safety program, and earn awards.

"The safety VISA is an excellent tool for maintaining employee safety awareness," said Grady Owens, COD's safety manager. "Employees are seeking ways to participate to gain VISA points, and I'm glad to help them do just that. It's good for them and it's good for the organization. We've had zero OSHA reportable incidents in our civil service ranks for more than 2½ years, and I believe safety awareness at the individual level is the key."

"I'm especially excited about the Shared Care card developed by the employees. This card is designed for one employee to hand to another when good or poor safety behavior is observed. It's non-offensive but does get across the idea that we're observing each other in a caring way to reduce accident potential. To me, that's where we have to get to be truly a VPP culture. I want to sell this concept to the JSC community. I think it's that good."

COD employees marked the first anniversary of the Shared Care Program with a special awards ceremony on June 1. The 72 employees who participated in the Safety VISA Program during the first year collected awards. The VISA awards were divided into three levels in increments of 25 points.

The Transportation Branch led the directorate with 100 percent participation. Taking top individual honors were Libby Salas, division secretary for the Logistics Division, and Alexis Davis, secretary in the Facilities Engineering Division. ■



NASA JSC Photo 2000e16637
Libby Salas, left, and Alexis Davis took top honors at the first Center Operations Directorate VISA Award ceremony.

Elements of the program include facility inspections, planned emergency drills, and the safety card.

All COD employees are encouraged to take responsibility for the condition of their work areas by participating in inspections not only of their work areas but of

First 'MAX' Award given for outstanding job

By Mary Peterson

Patricia Banks, a Science Applications International Corporation engineer assigned to the STS-101 mission, thought she had done a good job. She didn't know how good until she found herself the center of applause at a special ceremony held June 19, where she was honored as the very first recipient of the newly installed Safety, Reliability, and Quality Assurance "MAX" Award.

"I was totally surprised," Banks said, "and really thrilled. I like to think I do a good job, but this was something I never expected." She was generous in her praise of others in the directorate, saying there were many who deserved recognition as well. The MAX Award, so named to recognize Mission Accomplishments eXtraordinary, is being awarded after each



NASA JSC Photo 2000-05268 by Mark Sowa
NASA Safety, Reliability, and Quality Assurance Director John Casper presents the MAX Award to Pat Banks, Science Applications International Corporation safety and mission assurance engineer, for her significant contributions to the success of the STS-101 mission.

mission to honor a selected individual for specific contributions to the success of human space flight.

Banks was cited for providing outstanding tracking and reporting of certification and approval status for the STS-101/2A.2a manifested hardware that included JSC GFE, non-JSC GFE, international partner GFE, crew performance items and payloads.

In presenting the award, SR&QA Director John Casper said, "This required an enormous amount of coordination between SR&QA, engineering divisions, launch package managers, and Russian interfaces for U.S.- and Russian-provided

hardware." Banks was constantly inundated with requests for status and, inevitably, for explanations of the status, all of which she handled reliably, accurately, and with unflagging courtesy.

In addition to a mission lapel pin and framed certificate, Banks had the further honor of hanging the crew mission logo for STS-101 on the wall of the directorate conference room.

"With the MAX Award," said Deputy Director Rob Kelso, "we hope to recognize those among the 700 SR&QA civil servants and contractors who do make an outstanding contribution to the safety and success of our human space flight missions. We have no doubt there are a lot of 'heroes behind-the-scenes' who merit this distinction."

Calls for nominations will be sent to managers immediately following each shuttle landing, and nominations will be submitted to the SR&QA directorate awards lead. The director and deputy director will then make the final selection. ■